

8. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE COMMON GREY HORN-BILL *TOCKUS BIROSTRIS* (SCOPOLI) NEAR BOMBAY

The note on the occurrence of the Common Grey Hornbill *Tockus birostris* (Scopoli) in the Government House Gardens in Bombay City (S. R. Amladi & J. C. Daniel, *JBNHS* 70(2):378-379) prompts a few remarks.

I did record seeing a Malabar Grey Hornbill *T. griseus* (Latham) at Ghodbunder in Salsette Island on 17 April 1943. The bird was being chivvied by crows and the fleeting glimpse was put down as *griseus*, for this was the nearest recorded species (from the Ghat area of Khandala) and there was no evidence of *birostris* occurring in the Konkan, away from the Deccan.

In 1945, a bird flying across at Powai was definitely noted as *birostris* (*JBNHS* 45, p. 242) and many subsequent sightings more carefully examined convince me:

1) that the earlier records of *Tockus griseus* from Salsette and the Konkan were in error for *T. birostris*, and

2) that *birostris* has either newly entered this area or increased appreciably in numbers. Its occurrence in the neighbourhood of Bombay was not referred to by earlier authors but in recent years it has been seen on most trips to the Borivli National Park and also at Kihim, across the harbour in Kolaba district, where 8 were seen together. The birds in the Government House Gardens were mentioned to me a few years ago, but I did not have the opportunity of seeing them.

Having been specifically noted in April, May and December, it is unlikely that they are migratory to any large extent. The Grey Hornbill is essentially a bird of deciduous forests and open plains (or gardens) interspersed with large trees. I have seen it feeding on the fruit of the teak (*Tectona grandis*) and *Manilkara hexandra*.

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9. FEEDING HABITS OF THE STAR TORTOISE—
GEOCHELONE ELEGANS

(With a photograph)

In keeping several pairs of the land tortoise *G. elegans* we note that they are mostly vegetarians, feeding on a wide variety of grasses and shrubs which grow in our large snake enclosure. On several occa-